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Good morning Senator Maynard , Representative Guerrero and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Nate Brown, and I'm here today on behalf of the Operating Engineers Local 478 an organization that represents nearly 3500 heavy equipment operators throughout Connecticut. I am here today to request your support of House Bill 5125, House Bill 6050, House Bill 6051 and House Bill 6052 all which ask for tolling on our highways back in Connecticut.

I would like to begin by thanking committee members by raising these important bills to help fund much needed infrastructure repair and by doing so start putting the men and women of Connecticut's construction industry back to work. An abundant amount of ideas have been raised in the past, from tolling only limited access highways , to all electronic tolling which would allow motorists to pass through without having to slow down. We understand that residents of Connecticut will always have an issue with tolling. Those same residents also have an issue with a deteriorating infrastructure that they drive on every day. This is a way to generate revenue to fix those problems. It is essential that we consider fairness and equity when we assess the installation of possible systems.

We believe that these bills could be extremely successful when properly implemented.

What no one can deny is that we are surrounded by states that collect billions in tolls. Why Connecticut's I95 or I84 be the only "FREEWAY"? When we drive down the New York thruway or Massachusetts Turnpike, Connecticut residents are tossing money into the coffers of those border states funding their transportation costs. Yet when cars and trucks are crossing into Connecticut to enter New England all we are is a pass through state footing the bill.

Since tolls were abolished in Connecticut in 1989, out of state cars, buses & trucks no longer help defray the high cost of maintaining our crumbling infrastructure.

The public must be made aware of the simplicity of the EZ pass systems and we must be assured that if tolls were to be implemented in Connecticut that the funds generated stay in a dedicated transportation fund and not be raided for other state issues.

Connecticut needs to face the reality that we can no longer afford transportation costs by collections from the gas or gross receipts taxes. We must be fair, use the newest in twenty-first century technology and we must act promptly.

Thank you for your time.